ADVERTISEMENT.

The Dictionary of Dr. Johnson has been rightly pronounced a wonderful achievement of genius and labour. Yet Dr. Johnson admitted, that, in forming it, he had not satisfied his own expectations; and, after a revision of it, he replied to a friend, who had sent him additions too late to be inserted, that if many readers had been as judicious, as diligent, and as communicative, the Dictionary would have been better. He probably, therefore, would not have scorned an augmentation or correction, though offered by one of less attainments than his friend, if offered with due respect.

This consideration supports, in some degree, the mind of the present editor. For, though he feels all the diffidence which most men would feel in occasionally questioning the authority of Dr. Johnson, he is induced to hope, that the warmest admirers of that incomparable man will not disparage the industry which he himself might perhaps have countenanced.

The fruits, such as they are, of the present editor's employment, will be found in an abundant supply of words which have hitherto been omitted; in a rectification of many which etymology, in particular, requires; and in exemplifying several which are without illustration. These words are often the property of authors, the "very dust of whose writings is gold," of Pearson, and of Barrow, whose names might very frequently have graced the pages of a national Dictionary; of Bacon and Raleigh, of Jeremy Taylor, of Milton, and Hammond, and Hall, and many others, whose words indeed have largely, but of which the stock is not exhausted, conveyed, in the example, "some elegance of language, or some precept of prudence or piety." These words commend to notice many writers also, who have been unjustly neglected or slightly examined; men who have taught with energy the lessons of human life, and who have explored with accuracy.

* The Reverend Mr. Bagshaw, of Bromley College. This answer is in Boswell's Life of Johnson. Additions and corrections, which had been made by this gentleman, have been entrusted to the present editor; of which, as well as of other communications made to him with great liberality and without solicitation, he will, in the Introduction to this work, give an explicit account.
† Bentley, of Bishop Pearson. Dissert. on Phalaris.
‡ Johnson's Plan of an English Dictionary.
pleasure to incorporate his labours. He had doubtless some talents for research; but he has lowered them by perpetually insulting the memory of Johnson, whom he brands with "muddiness of intellect." Not such have been the exertions of the Reverend Mr. Boucher; of which a specimen has been given to the public in the first letter of the alphabet, and which abundantly, as well as most learnedly, shows how much remains to be done, in order to have a perfect view of the English language.

The proprietors of this work have, with unsolicited kindness, procured, for the present editor's inspection, the papers of the late Mr. Horne Tooke, and his copy of Johnson's Dictionary, with some marginal remarks; the late Mr. Henton's interleaved but slightly noted copy of the same; and the late Mr. Eyre's copy, with additional references in the margin. But these have yielded no great harvest of intelligence. What has been gained, will be more fully detailed, with other obligations to his friends, from whom he must not be remiss in mentioning that he has received some remarks of the late Mr. Malone, in the general Introduction to this work.

After all, what the present editor has done, he considers but dust in the balance, when weighed against the work of Dr. Johnson. He is content, if his countrymen shall admit that he has contributed somewhat towards that which may or may not exhaust; that his efforts, though imperfect, are not useless. And it is just that he ought to have preserved so much caution through the work, as rarely to sink into negligence; and to have obtained so much knowledge of all its parts, as seldom to fail by ignorance; he has only to hope that their frequent disappointment may be consolled by the following words: "He that endureth no faults in men's writings must only read his own, wherein for the most part all appeareth white. Inadvertency, expedition, and human lapses, may make not only learned authors, who notwithstanding, being judged by the capital matter, admit not of disparagement."

August 1, 1814.

* See Dr. Johnson's Plan of an English Dictionary.